

In the Claims

Claims 1-40 [Canceled].

1 41. [New] An electronic mail communication method comprising:
2 providing an electronic mail communication using a sender;
3 ascertaining a value granting access to the electronic mail
4 communication;
5 attaching the value to the electronic mail communication using the
6 sender;
7 after the attaching, outputting the electronic mail communication having
8 the attached value for communication to a recipient;
9 after the outputting, analyzing the attached value; and
10 responsive to the analysis, accessing contents of the electronic mail
11 communication using the recipient.

1 42. [New] The method of claim 41 further comprising:
2 increasing the attached value responsive to the analyzing; and
3 granting access to the contents of the electronic mail communication
4 responsive to the increasing.

1 43. [New] The method of claim 42 wherein the wherein the increasing
2 comprises increasing without interaction of the sender after the outputting.

1 44. [New] The method of claim 42 wherein the increasing comprises
2 increasing to another value authorized by the sender before the outputting.

1 45. [New] The method of claim 41 wherein the analyzing comprises:
2 comparing the attached value with respect to a desired value of the
3 recipient; and
4 accepting the electronic mail communication responsive to the attached
5 value being one of equal to and exceeding the desired value, and wherein the
6 accessing is responsive to the accepting.

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1 46. [New] The method of claim 41 wherein the ascertaining comprises
2 ascertaining a range of different values, the attaching comprises attaching one
3 of the values, and the analyzing comprises:
4 comparing the attached value with respect to a desired value of the
5 recipient;
6 determining that the attached value is less than the desired value;
7 responsive to the determining, increasing the attached value to be one of
8 equal to and exceeding the desired value within the range of different values;
9 and
10 accepting the electronic mail communication responsive to the attached
11 value being one of equal to and exceeding the desired value, and wherein the
12 accessing is responsive to the accepting.

1 47. [New] The method of claim 41 wherein the attaching the value
2 comprises attaching an electronic check including the value, and the analyzing
3 comprises analyzing the electronic check in a clearinghouse process to verify
4 that sufficient funds are available corresponding to the attached value, and
5 further comprising accepting the electronic mail communication responsive to
6 the verification and wherein the accessing is responsive to the accepting.

1 48. [New] The method of claim 47 wherein the analyzing comprises
2 communicating the electronic check to a clearinghouse process entity configured
3 to perform the verification.

1 49. [New] The method of claim 41 wherein the attaching the value
2 comprises attaching an electronic check, and further comprising:
3 communicating the electronic check to a clearinghouse process entity
4 after the outputting, and wherein the analyzing comprises analyzing the
5 electronic check using the clearinghouse process entity;
6 communicating a verification using the clearinghouse process entity after
7 the analyzing; and

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8 accepting the electronic mail communication responsive to the
9 communicated verification, and wherein the accessing is responsive to the
10 accepting.

1 50. [New] The method of claim 41 wherein the attaching the value
2 comprises attaching an electronic check including the value, and the analyzing
3 comprises analyzing the electronic check in a clearinghouse process configured
4 to process checks.

1 51. [New] The method of claim 41 wherein the attaching the value
2 comprises attaching an electronic check including the value, and the analyzing
3 comprises analyzing the electronic check in a clearinghouse process configured
4 to process checks including verifying a digital signature of the sender and a
5 digital signature of the recipient.

1 52. [New] The method of claim 41 wherein the electronic check is
2 configured to cause the transfer of currency corresponding to the attached value
3 from the sender to the recipient responsive to the accessing.

1 53. [New] The method of claim 41 wherein the attaching comprises
2 attaching an electronic check which identifies a bearer, and the analyzing
3 comprises comparing identities of the bearer and the recipient, and the
4 accessing comprises accessing responsive to the recipient countersigning the
5 check as the bearer.

1 54. [New] The method of claim 41 wherein the attaching the value
2 comprises attaching an electronic check including the value, and the analyzing
3 comprises verifying an identity of a bank from which the attached value of the
4 electronic check will be drawn.

1 55. [New] The method of claim 41 further comprising:
2 outputting another electronic mail communication having another
3 attached value for communication to the recipient;

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4 comparing the another attached value with respect to a desired value of
5 the recipient; and
6 responsive to the another attached value being less than the desired
7 value, rejecting the another electronic mail communication wherein the contents
8 of the another electronic mail communication are not accessed by the recipient.

1 56. [New] The method of claim 55 wherein the rejecting comprises
2 returning the electronic mail communication to the sender.

1 57. [New] The method of claim 41 further comprising:
2 outputting another electronic mail communication not having an attached
3 value; and
4 analyzing the another electronic mail communication comprises identifying
5 the absence of the attached value; and
6 responsive to the absence of the attached value, rejecting the another
7 electronic mail communication wherein the contents of the another electronic
8 mail communication are not accessed by the recipient.

1 58. [New] The method of claim 41 wherein the providing the
2 electronic mail communication comprises providing an initial electronic mail
3 communication, and further comprising:
4 providing another electronic mail communication having an attached
5 value; and
6 sorting the initial electronic mail communication and the another
7 electronic mail communication within an inbox of the recipient according to the
8 respective attached values of the initial and another electronic mail
9 communications.

1 59. [New] The method of claim 41 wherein the analyzing comprises
2 analyzing using a processor of an Internet Service Provider configured to
3 communicate electronic mail communications to the recipient.

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- 1 60. [New] The method of claim 59 communicating the electronic mail
- 2 communication from the Internet Service Provider to the recipient responsive to
- 3 the analysis.

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